

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 9, 2003
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

The Board convened in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, 6th Floor, Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington. Commissioners Morris, Stanton, and Pridemore, Chair, present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Commissioners conducted the Flag Salute.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kent Dosch, 10809 NW 13th Place, Vancouver, provided information to the Board regarding a house located at 1101 NW 109th Street, in the Hazel Dell/Felida area. Mr. Dosch stated that he and his wife have 6-year-old triplet girls and an 8-year-old boy, and live nearby the residence in question. He said in the past year and a half they have received 12-15 notices that have disrupted their lives. Dosch offered a copy of the flyer to the Board regarding a man named Jerry Washburn and proceeded to read it aloud.

Morris interjected that she preferred that the flyer not be read out loud, but that copies could certainly be made for the audience. She summarized for the audience that the flyer was a description of a sex offender's violation history towards young girls.

Dosch stated that the house has three bedrooms, but according to the postman he has delivered to as many as 12 occupants. Dosch said that one of his neighbors found out that the house has been converted to accommodate five bedrooms so that they can house as many sex offenders as possible, and it's been done without a permit. Dosch said there have been as many as 9 level III offenders occupying the house at one time; there's a total of 35 level III's in Clark County and they are considered to be the most dangerous. He further explained. Dosch stated that the system is fractured and it's unacceptable no matter where it occurs. He said it is unethical and immoral to allow something such as this to occur and that his children have nightmares and no longer want to play outside. Dosch said that another major problem was that no one, including halfway houses, would take the offenders. He said he would like to see the city ordinance enforced, which doesn't allow offenders to live within 1,000 feet of one another in a residential area. He also suggested using an old apartment building or hotel in an industrial area where officials from the Department of Corrections could set up offices. Dosch said that someone has to figure something out.

Morris noted that Mr. Dosch had voiced similar concerns as that of his neighbor at the previous hearing. She said they are in the process of working on the issue.

Pridemore referenced an article published in the Columbian, which talked about some form of action by the state.

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Dosch said that was correct. He said the Department of Corrections had finally decided that they weren't going to sponsor the landlord's houses anymore. However, he said that the landlord would probably do anything to circumvent it. He further explained.

Pridemore explained that judges create the orders and so they will need to keep looking for solutions.

CONSENT AGENDA

There being no public comment, **MOVED** by Stanton to approve items 1 through 14. Commissioners Pridemore, Morris, and Stanton voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 37)

PUBLIC HEARING: LOW INCOME HOUSING FINANCING

Held a public hearing to consider approval of an Interlocal Agreement between Clark County and the Housing Authority of the City of Vancouver to provide housing units affordable to very low-income persons under RCW 36.22.178. This interlocal will allow the Housing Authority to acquire housing projects or land for future housing for very low-income persons. The Board considered a resolution authorizing the issuance of \$2 million in limited tax general obligation bonds (or some fashion thereof) to finance these low-income housing projects.

John Payne, Treasurer's Department, made brief opening statements and introduced Kurt Creager, Vancouver Housing Authority.

Kurt Creager, CEO, Vancouver Housing Authority, spoke in favor of the interlocal agreement. He said this would allow them to cause development to occur where cities and the county policymakers say they want it to happen. Creager explained that the eventual user of the sites acquired by the Housing Authority with the funds would be determined by the Clark County Housing Review Board. He further explained. Creager added that given the fact that interest rates remain reasonably low and land opportunities are plentiful in the suburban cities, they are prepared to move ahead with the agreement.

Morris asked Creager if he had used the word "suburban?"

Creager said yes.

Morris commented that there are no suburban cities, only urban and rural according to the GMA.

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Creager explained that his use of that word was probably just part of the “baggage” that he brought from King County.

Pridemore said that it seems that the Vancouver Housing Authority is providing more market-place level housing, such as Esther Short Commons. He asked if that money was genuinely going to be for low income housing projects.

Creager said they have a commitment to mixed income housing because neighborhoods accept a mix of incomes more likely than they would accept a freestanding development entirely existing of very low income housing. He said that Esther Short Commons actually has about 20 market rate housing units on the top floors with views of the river; the other housing units will be for people working downtown with incomes not to exceed 60% of the median income. *Creager* said this money was different. It's limited by statute to assisting households with no more than 50% of the median income. He said they believe they need to account for the money for the specific units. He said in this instance they are down-scaling their vision to look for sites that would accommodate 30, 40, or 50 units. They would be looking for smaller infill sites, where the incomes are no more than 50% of the median income. He further explained.

Pridemore said that he had met with rental owners who expressed concern about vacancy rates, which is 25-50% of their rental units. One of their concerns is that the Vancouver Housing Authority has become a competitor in the free market rental place.

Creager responded that the Vancouver Housing Authority is actually a partner with over 700 landlords in Clark County and they provide monthly rental assistance checks to them – approximately \$10 million. He said they would be happy to work with any landlord who has vacancy problems by insuring that they have access to people holding the rental assistance vouchers. He said they do look for and are open to new partnership opportunities. He explained that they have a consumer centered approach to property management.

Pridemore said that one of the severe housing issues that has come before the Board is how to house Level III sex offenders. He asked if the Vancouver Housing Authority has ever had discussion about what they might be able to do in order to meet that housing need.

Creager said they have had discussions and that the YWCA was paid by the Department of Corrections to undertake a community planning process. He said they attended each meeting and fully participated. He said it is a complex and troublesome issue and referred to the previous speaker's comments regarding liability. *Creager* said that because it has been determined that Level III sex offenders are most likely to re-offend, the Housing Authority does not house them. Also, he said they don't house Level II sex offenders who have violent criminal histories; however, they do house Level I sex offenders who are fully treated and in compliance

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with the law and not assumed to be a risk to the community. He said their only recourse is to work with the faith community – churches and other organizations.

Pridemore noted that the private sector has a great deal of problems dealing with liability concerns and one of the purposes for the Housing Authority was to meet housing needs that could not be met through the private sector. He asked *Creager* why the Housing Authority would not deal with Level III sex offenders, given their public sector mandate.

Creager said they have millions of dollars in dedicated reserves for a variety of projects. He said they are a “public institution so they are a stationary object when it comes to legal liability.” He further explained.

Morris asked if liability was the only issue. She said if they could work around that issue, the Housing Authority has millions of dollars in reserves...

Creager said liability was the principal issue. The secondary issue was the quiet enjoyment of the residential property by the neighborhoods and the other residents.

Pridemore asked about help dealing with it. The previous speaker had suggested the possibility of an industrial area that perhaps Clark County could partner with to find a location that wouldn't be close to vulnerable populations.

Creager said he thought they did have a role to play in that regard, but because of the land use pattern in Clark County they do not have a lot of residential real estate in industrial areas. He said there needs to be a coalition effort of the Housing Authority, private landlords, and non-profits in the faith community.

Pridemore said he has an increasing expectation that the Vancouver Housing Authority would get involved in the issue and help find a solution. He said he would be happy to talk about that with the Housing Authority's Board. He stressed that Vancouver Housing Authority is at the forefront of the few entities in Clark County who can address the problem in a proactive way. He added that although this doesn't directly relate to the low income housing issue before the Board today, it could because these offenders do have very low incomes.

Creager assured the Board that this is a matter of continuing discussion.

Morris said it's a matter of action and the Board would like to help find a way to do that.

Creager said this is an opportunity to talk about goals, but that he felt they should decouple the low income housing funding source from this issue in the short run.

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Pridemore said he didn't necessarily want to even do that because he sees it as being a severe need and this is one funding source that at least could be on the table for discussion. He added that they are directly related, or certainly could be.

Stanton said these people come out into society as very low income, so it is appropriate to have that discussion.

Pridemore thanked Mr. Creager and the Committee for their work in putting the program together.

Karen Boyle, Foster Pepper and Shefelman, Bond Council, explained that the resolution approves the interlocal agreement and authorizes the Chair to execute it, as well as authorizes the Treasurer to go forth and start working on the bond issue that would finance this undertaking. She said they would ultimately come back with a bond resolution to approve the financing. She said the agreement specifically states that it shall be very low income population, which is 50% of median income.

There was no public comment.

MOVED by Morris to approve Resolution 2003-09-07. Commissioners Pridemore, Morris, and Stanton voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 37)

The Board of County Commissioners' hearing adjourned and they reconvened as the Board of Health.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

There was no consent agenda.

Hearing adjourned.

Hearing Reconvened at 2 p.m. for a Bid Opening

Present at the Bid Opening:

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*Louise Richards, Clerk of the Board; and Mike Westerman and Allyson Anderson,
General Services*

BID OPENING 2340

Held a public hearing for Bid Opening 2340 – Annual Concrete Culvert. Mike Westerman, General Services, opened and read a single bid. Westerman said it was their intention to award Bid 2340 on September 16, 2003, at 10:00 a.m., in the Commissioners' hearing room of the Clark County Public Service Center, 6th Floor. (See Tape 37)

Hearing adjourned.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Craig A. Pridemore/s/
Craig A. Pridemore, Chair

Betty Sue Morris, Commissioner

Judie Stanton/s/
Judie Stanton, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Louise Richards/s/
Clerk of the Board

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